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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this program, funded under Title I of 1965 Elementary Secondary Act, is to send paraprofessional workers who are familiar with the community into the homes of high school students who show serious problems in school attendance, adjustment, or achievement. The objective is to establish rapport between the school and the parents in the hope that better communication would help prevent problem students from dropping out of school. Evaluation procedures involved analyses of school records data on absenteeism, lateness for class, and academic achievement in language skills. Questionnaire and interview schedules were used to assess parent, student, and staff attitudes toward the program, toward self, and toward education. Analysis techniques involved simple descriptive statistics and standard tools for detecting significant group differences. The major findings include the following gains, which were obtained for only one of the two participating high schools: (a) a decrease in absenteeism during the 1969-70 year as compared to the 1968-69 school year; (b) a decrease in being late for classes during the 1969-70 school year as compared to the 1968-69 school year; and, (c) patterns of change in English achievement levels from June 1969 to June 1970 similar to a norm of other students in that high school. (Author/JM)

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FINAL REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE

1969-1970

SCHOOL-HOME LIAISON PROGRAM

PROGRAMS AND PATTERNS FOR DISADVANTAGED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Evaluation of a New York City school district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10), performed under contract with the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1969-70 school year.

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THE SCHOOL-HOME LIASON PROGRAM

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THE SCHOOL-HOME LIAISON PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The stated purpose of the School-Home Liaison Program is to send paraprofessional workers who are familiar with the community into the homes of students who show serious problems in school attendence, adjustment or achievement. The objective of the program is to establish rapport between the school and the parents in hope that better communication would help prevent problem students from dropping out of school.

The program began with fourteen family assistants, four at Central Commerical High School and ten at Julia Richman High School. The workers were to assist the school's attendance coordinators, deans and guidance service in solving problems of underachievement, truancy, lateness and cutting. These family assistants were scheduled to work five hours a day, from October 1, 1969 to June 20, 1970. The staff at Julia Richman included an additional family worker who served as a coordinator of Julia Richman School-Home Liaison Program with supervision by the school administration.

Objectives and Methods of Evaluation

In summary the evaluation objectives were to determine the extent to which the School-Home Liaison Program (SHLP): (1) reduced student absenteeism and lateness for class and enhanced their achievement levels and positive attitudes toward school self and others; (2) increased parental rapport with school personnel and created a view that beneficial assistance to parents is available at school for themselves and their children; and (3) exhibited problems and strengthes as assessed by family assistants, parents, students, administrators and other school staff.

Procedures of analyses involved school records data on absenteeism, lateness for class, and academic achievement in language skills; questionnaire and interview scheduals were used to assess parent, student and staff attitudes toward the program, toward self and toward education, analyses techinques involved simple discriptive statistics and standard significant tools for differences.

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Findings and Interpretations

Contrary to the originally pessimistic expectations of the Teaching & Learning Research Corp. evaluation staff and in spite of the handicaps encountered, there have been many positive results of the School-Home Liaison Program. Briefly summarized, the major findings are:

1. The sample students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School who had been serviced by a Family Assistant as compared to a norm group of other students in their school:

    a. exhibited a decrease in absenteeism during the 1969-70 school year as compared to the 1968-69 school year.

    b. exhibited a decrease in being late for classes during the 1969-70 school year as compared to the 1968-69 school year.

    c. exhibited similar patterns of change in English achievement levels from June 1969 to June 1970.

2. The sample students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Central Commercial High School as contrasted to students in the program at Julia Richman High School did not do so well. As compared to a norm group, students who had been serviced by a family assistant increased in absenteeism and tardiness and dropped in achievement levels. Whether this group would have done even worse without the family assistants is open to question.

3. Given the responses of the students at Central Commercial High School as well as at Julia Richman High School, that they had rapport with their assistants, that the program helped many of them, and that they wanted the program expanded, warrants the view that the School-Home Liaison Program is making a contribution to the welfare of those students who have exhibited serious problems of truancy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The major recommendations of the Teaching & Learning Research Corp, evaluation staff revolve around expanding the School-Home Liaison Program and organizational features so as to provide services to all those students who are referred to the program.

The school population at Julia Richman has almost doubled in the last few years, yet the number of family assistants has not increased. With the rise of truancy and drop-outs, which has exceeded the rise in population proportionately, there is an apparent need for more workers.

The Julia Richman Program seems to succeed in defining the role of the workers. The administrators, the teachers, students, and workers themselves are not confused about what their duties are. The co-ordinator insures that communication flows between administration, to workers and parents.

At Central Commercial High School there is a need for better organization of the family assistants. With clearly defined duties the family assistants would be a happier working force. The role of the family assistant is not clear to other school personnel. The assistants perceive themselves as "helping people"; the guidance counselors see the workers as an extension of the truant office; the students see their role as glorified teacher aides or worse, as policemen who patrol the halls, gathering evidence and then informing on students to their parents. Students at Central Commercial High School are not as likely as students at Julia Richman to be told beforehand of planned parent visitations. It is recommended that the program be organized so that it will have more association with the guidance office. The duties of the family assistant should be less discipline oriented and more service oriented, that is, the family assistants should not also serve as disciplinary school aides.

On a more positive stance and in light of the success of the School-Home Liaison Program with those parents and students who have worked with a family assistant, it is suggested that more family assistants be hired so that greater effort can be made to have home contacts and increase the number of home visits and or visits at school with parents and students* We believe that if this is done, the School-Home Liaison Program is more likely to bring greater numbers of truant students back into a valued participation in school.

* The program has already been favorably reviewed by the Office of High School Projects. According to Mrs. Mary Hamilton, the program was expanded in February to include seven more schools and forty-nine family assistants.

CHAPTER I

THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL - HOME LIAISON PROGRAMS

The stated purpose of the School-Home Liaison Program is to send workers who are familiar with the community into the homes of students who show problems in school adjustment or achievement. The objective of the program is to establish rapport between the school and the parents in hope that better communication would help prevent problem students from dropping out of school.

The program began with fourteen family assistants, four at Central Commercial High School and ten at Julia Richman High School. The workers were to assist the school's attendance coordinators, deans and guidance service in solving problems of underachievement, truancy, lateness and cutting. These family assistants were scheduled to work five hours a day, from October 1, 1969 to June 20, 1970. The staff at Julia Richman was to include an additional family worker who would serve as a coordinator of Julia Richman School-Home Liaison Program with supervision by the school administration.

The selection and training of the staff at each high school was conducted by the individual school administrations. The School-Home Liaison programs at Central Commercial and Julia Richman High Schools emerged under the structures of institutions quite different in many ways. For example, Julia Richman High School drew its students from a limited neighborhood area while Central Commercial High School drew its students from across the city. Obviously it would be easier for personnel in a neighborhood school to contact parents than it is for a staff in a school covering the city. For this reason and several others which are unique to each setting, it was decided to gather, analyze and report our findings for each program separately.

BACKGROUND: CENTRAL COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL

The family assistant program started at Central Commercial High School in October 1969. However, similar activities of home visits "situation guidance", have been in effect for seven years with the present family assistants serving as teacher aides. The program now consists of a working force of three women and two men. Two women represent the Puerto Rican community and often act as interpreters within the school and on visits to Spanish speaking parents. The two men represent the black population of the school. The remaining woman is white, Italian origin and speaks some Italian.

The school which specializes in commercial training, draws its student body from five boroughs instead of one community. After two or three years of training, students are allowed to attend school a half day and work the other half. The school day beginning at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m. Two shifts of students every day present a human traffic problem, yet there are no policemen patrolling the entrances as can be found in other high schools.

The members of the program stated that the overall purpose of the family assistance program at Central Commercial was to help students who, due to personal or family problems, showed deficiencies in school achievement, attendance, or had behavior problems. Many workers felt that drugs presented one major problem and that much effort is spent keeping drug users out of the lavatories, and prevent drug abuse which is suspected to cause truancy and hostile behavior. This process illustrates the dual role of these workers: school aide and family assistant.

The approach used by Central Commercial's family assistants is to directly counsel students who are disrupting school functions, or to directly contact the problem students' families.

The procedures used by these workers start with investigation, usually initiated by the Bureau of Attendance Representative. The family assistants themselves may also observe detrimental behavior and report it to the Administration. The Administration assigns contacts with the parents of students who show negative behavior. The assignments are made by Mr. Daniels who is the Assistant Principal and Director of the program.

BACKGROUND: JULIA RICHMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Julia Richman High School, located at 67 Street on the East Side serves the upper east side of Manhattan. Its student population is 4,500, the majority of the students are either Puerto Rican or black. The school provides a wide variety of college preparatory, academic and vocational programs.

The family assistance program started at Julia Richman High School three years ago. It was initiated by the joint effort of the school administration and the East Harlem Community Corporation.

The staff consists of eleven Family Assistants. One worker, Mrs. Ryan, served as co-ordinator of the workers from the start of the program. All of the workers are women, the majority are from the Puerto Rican community. Their work-day is limited to five

hours, with a five-day work week. One day a week is spent within the school.

The school requires that the workers live within the school zones serviced by the school. The Julia Richman Parents Association recommends and interviews prospective workers. The East Harlem Corporation approves the applicants and the school appoints the workers. Applicants not familiar with the Parents Association may apply directly to the school.

The procedure of the workers as told by Mrs. Balsom, administrative assistant, and Mrs. Ryan, the co-ordinator of the program is as follows: "The investigation and contact work done by the family assistants is initiated primarily by the counselors and the Dean of Students along with the Attendance Officer. The assignments are given to the family assistant co-ordinator. She, in turn, assigns the workers for family visits. The assignments consist of attempting to assist those with problems of poor achievement, poor adjustment, and class cutting."

The workers mentioned that when their schedule allowed, they visited the parents of students who were doing well in school. The family assistants not only carry reports of problem children, but they also supply parents with the follow-up progress of a student and general information about the school and community facilities.

The workers keep logs of their visitations and of the outcomes of their meetings. They also keep the findings of their visits in a card file in Mrs. Ryan's office. They have the clerical task of making monthly, weekly, and daily reports of carfare and telephone spending.

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND SERVICES

The major mission of the School-Home Liaison Program, as it was originally designed in purpose and concept was to send workers who are familiar with the community into the homes of students who show problems in school adjustment or achievement so as to help these students improve educationally or socially as the case may be. More specifically, the Program aspired to achieve its general objective through the attainment of the following goals:

1. The reduction of class cutting and tardiness.
2. The reduction of dropouts from scho[illegible]
3. The improvement in school achie[illegible]ement.
4. The improvement in attitudes toward school.
5. The creation of rapport in parents of problem students toward Family Assistants.

6. To provide parents with information they believe they can use to help their children.
7. To provide needed information on family background of the student for the school staff.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW FUNCTIONS

Every institution starts with a set of purposes which are altered with its growth. This is true no matter how noble the original purposes, nor how capable and dedicated were its founders and workers. In the course of implementing a program unforseen exigencies, problems and new learning occurs. As a consequence, new goals sometimes arise to supplement the original purposes. Sometimes the original purposes are modified. And sometimes the original guiding goals of the program are dropped entirely for new purposes. Whatever the reason for change, the development of programs should be evaluated as to emergent guiding purposes.

To evaluate a program only with reference to its original goals may result in failing to recognize relevant and important successes or failures of that system. In light with this belief, the evaluation team was guided by a sensitivity to the important views and objectives of all participants in order to assess institutional changes.

Chapter II

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

The evaluation of educational programs is often handicapped by not having control groups, lack of randomness in assigning subjects to programs, and so forth. This study is no exception in this regard. However, this study does have a number of advantages. To begin with, it was possible to obtain a norm group for each School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School. In addition it was also possible to assess the changes that took place in the students from the 1968-69 and 1969-70 school years.

Obviously, the greatest handicap to evaluation was a result in part of the nature of the students served by this program. Chronic truants or their families often would not see a family assistant let alone be interviewed by an evaluation staff member. As a consequence we had to limit our evaluation objectives to those who had seen a family assistant worker. For the many students and parents who had notbeen reached, whether for reasons of refusal to talk to a worker, or simply because of the large number who were referred to overloaded workers, this study can make no judgements beyond the fact that there are many who are not served.

Only two other serious problems confronted the evaluation team. Unfortunately, there was only one academic subject that all subjects had had for two years in a row so that we had to limit our assessment of changes in academic achievement to changes in English achievement levels. The other problem was in determining dropouts. In-as-much as a chronic truant is placed in a "paper section" it is difficult to obtain school records indicating drop-out status.

EVALUATION GOALS

The evaluation objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To assess the extent to which students who had been serviced by a family assistant (compared to the norms for their schools):

   a. reduced the number of times they were late for school.

b. reduced their absenteeism.

c. increased their academic achievement levels.

2. To assess the extent to which students who had been serviced by a family assistant:

a. developed a rapport with their family assistant.

b. viewed the program as having a beneficial impact on their attitudes toward school and their relationships with their teachers and other students.

3. To assess the extent to which parents who had seen a family assistant:

a. established rapport with the family assistant.

b. viewed the family assistant as having a beneficial impact on their child in school.

c. viewed the family assistant as a source of needed information and that the family assistant recognized the needs of students.

4. To assess the extent to which there are problems in executing the School-Home Liaison Program as viewed by family assistants, parents, students, and administrators of the School-Home Liaison Program.

5. To assess the extent to which the School-Home Liaison Program is able to service all students who are referred to the program.

6. To assess the extent to which the School-Home Liaison Program provides the added service of language interpretation for parents in their contacts with school personnel.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Subjects

From the total populations of students who participated in the School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School, two probability samples of 50, one from each school were drawn. Complete school records data were available for 35 of these students at Julia Richman High School and 25 of these students at Central Commercial High School. In addition, probability samples of 25 students (a totalof 50) to represent each school-norm groups - were also drawn. There were complete records data available on 18 of these students and Julia Richman High School and 22 of these students at Central Commercial High School.

Of the fifty sample students in the School-Home Liaison Program at each school, 24 from Julia Richman High School and 38 from Central Commercial High School could be reached and were willing to be interviewed. The reasons for excluding students ranged from students who had left the city, could not be found, refused to be interviewed, or had indicated they were unaware of the School-Home Liaison Program.

From the list of parents of students referred to the School-Home Liaison Program, 50 parents from Julia Richman High School and 50 parents from Central Commercial High School were drawn and contacted. Twenty-five of the parents at Julia Richman High School indicated they had been contacted and were interviewed by the evaluation staff of Teaching & Learning Research Corp. Fourteen of the parents at Central Commercial High School indicated they had been contacted and the evaluation staff of Teaching & Learning Research Corp. interviewed them. A summary of the responses of the students and parents are presented in descriptive statistics.

School Records Data and Analysis

Data on the number of times absent and late for class were obtained for both the 1968-69 and 1969-70 school years. Proportions of students who increased, stayed the same, or decreased in absenteeism and tardiness were determined for each student group and comparisons made.

Data on the students' English achievement levels were obtained from school records for June 1969 and June 1970. Again, proportions of students in each group were tabulated as to whether they increased, stayed the same or went down in English achievement levels.

Significance of differences in proportions (t test for unrelated samples) were calculated with alpha set at the .05 level.

Interview Data

The interview data are presented only in descriptive statistics. The parents and students responded to structured items and a question for suggestions to improve the program. See Appendix A and Appendix B.

In addition, family assistants, administrators with responsibility for the School-Home Liaison Program, students in general, teachers, and counselors were given unstructured interviews in on-site visitations by the evaluation staff of the Teaching & Learning Research Corp. They then summarized these qualitative judgments and these are presented in this report.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS: SCHOOL RECORDS DATA

As previously discussed, findings on the School-Home Liaison Program are reported separately for Central Commercial High School and Julia Richman High School.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Changes in academic rank for the two schools were assessed by the relative performance levels of students in English at the ends of the 1968-69 and 1969-70 school years.

Julia Richman

As shown in Table 3.1, the students in the School-Home Liaison program at Julia Richman High School did almost as well as the norm group for that school. Twenty-four percent of the students in the program decreased in relative standing in contrast to a norm of eighteen percent. Eight percent of the students in the program increased in English performance as contrasted to twelve percent of the other students.

The students in the program were almost identical with the norm group in remaining at the same level of performance (68% vs. 70%). It is therefore concluded that students serviced by the Family Assistants who previously exhibited extreme absenteeism and other school problems at Julia Richman High School showed changes in achievement at levels comparable to school norms. This is in accord with School-Home Liaison Program objectives.

Table 3.1. Changes in the academic achievement levels in English of students in Julia Richman High School: June 1969 to June 1970

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Academic Rank School-Home Liaison (N=35) (Clients) Julia Richman Norm Group (N=18)		
Increased	8%	12%	NS
No Change	68	70	
Decreased	24	18	NS
Total	100%	100%	

NS = No significant difference (.05 level) in proportions

Central Commercial

Quite a different result than that which occurred at Julia Richman High School occurred at Central Commercial High School. As shown in Table 3.2, at Central Commercial 64% of the students who had seen family assistants moved to lower levels of achievement in English as compared 45% of the norm group. Only 4% of the students who had seen family assistants increased their level of achievement as compared to 14% of the norm group. It may be concluded therefore, that there is no evidence that the Family Assistants at Central Commercial High School have assisted their students to higher levels of English achievement.

Table 3.2. Changes in the academic achievement levels in English of students in Central Commercial High School: June 1969 to June 1970.

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Academic Rank School-Home Liaison (N=25)	Central Commercial Norm Group (N=22)
Increase	4%	14%*
No Change	32%	41%
Decreased	64%	45%*
Totals	100%	100%

*Significant beyond .05 level.

ABSENTEEISM

Changes in absenteeism rates for the school years 1968-69 and 1969-70 were compared for both Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Julia Richman

As noted in Table 3.3, the absentee rate of students at Julia Richman High School who had seen family assistants was no different than the norm for that school. This is particularly surprising in light of the fact that students are often referred to Family assistants for excessive absenteeism. It is concluded, therefore, that the School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School has accomplished one of its primary objectives: the reduction of absenteeism.

Table 3.3 Changes in absentee rate of students in Julia Richman High School: 1968-69 vs. 1969-70 school years.

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Absenteeism: School-Home Liaison (N=35)	Julia Richman Norm Group (N=18)	
Increased	37%	34%	NS
No Change	46%	49%	
Decreased	17%	17%	NS
Totals	100%	100%	

Central Commercial

The findings reported in Table 3.4 show that students in the Central Commercial High School, School-Home Liaison Program had a significantly higher increase in absenteeism than the norm group for that school. There is no evidence here that the family assistants reduced absenteeism at Central Commercial High School.

Table 3.4. Changes in absentee rate of students in Central Commercial High School: 1968-69 vs. 1969-70 school years.

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Absenteeism: School-Home Liaison (N=25)	Central Commercial Norm Group (N=22)	
Increased	82%	60%*	
No Change	6%	20%	
Decreased	12%	20%	NS
Totals	100%	100%	

*Significant difference (.05 level) in proportions

LATE FOR CLASS

Changes in rate of being late for school for school years 1968-69 and 1969-70 are presented for both Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Julia Richman

The findings shown in Table 3.5 indicate that there were fewer students among those who had seen family assistants who increased in tardiness than characterized the norm for Julia Richman High School. This is in accord with the objectives of the Home-School Liaison Program.

Table 3.5. Changes in late for class rate of students in Julia Richman High School: 1968-69 vs. 1969-70 school years.

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Late for School: School-Home Liaison (N=35)	Julia Richman Norm Group (N=18)	
Increase	34%	44%*	
No Change	6%	0	
Decrease	60%	56%	NS
Totals	100%	100%	

Central Commercial

Students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Central Commercial High School, on the other hand, tended to increase in their rate of being late for school as compared to their norm group.

This is shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6. Changes in the late-for-class rate of students in Central Commercial High School: 1968-69 *vs.* 1969-70 school years.

Direction of Change	Percent Changes in Late-for-School: School-Home Liaison (N=25)	Central Commercial Norm Group (N=22)
Increased	74%	60%*
No Change	3%	5%
Decreased	23%	35%*
Totals	100%	100%

*Significant differences (.05 level) in proportions.

SUMMARY

In summary, the findings from the school records data indicate that students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School as compared to a norm group of other students in their school:

1. exhibited a greater decrease in absenteeism;
2. exhibited a greater decrease in being late for school; and
3. exhibited similar patterns of change in English achievement levels.

On the other hand, students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Central Commercial High School as compared to a norm group of other students in their school exhibited:

1. an increase in absenteeism;
2. an increase in being late for school;
3. a decrease in English achievement levels.

While the above results appear to favor the program at Julia Richman as being more successful at reducing tardiness and absenteeism and increasing achievement levels, the reader should be cautioned, as previously discussed, to recognize that perhaps the everyday working goals for the two systems may differ. In accord with what we believe to be the added functions, the following chapter presents findings on the community and parent--relations aspects of the program.

Chapter IV

INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF

One of the important features of an effective family assistant program is that a rapport, an ease of communication, be established between the family assistant and his clients, be they students or parents. It is also assumed that the clients should, in a successful program, view the program as having a desirable impact on the students. In an attempt to evaluate the perceptions of rapport and impact of the School-Home Liaison Program held by students and parents, structured and open-ended interviews were held with students, parents and staff. Our findings are as follows:

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Interview data from students who had seen a family assistant staff member are presented concerning: (1) rapport with family assistant; (2) impact of working with family assistant on school and home life; and (3) student suggestions for improving the School-Home Liaison Program.

Rapport with Family Assistant

The data in Table 4.1 , summarizes our findings concerning the students' views about whether the family assistant likes working with and wants to help him. This table also summarizes students' indications of whether they like to work with and find it easy to talk with family assistants. As shown in Table 4.1, the sample students at both Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School were overwhemingly positive in their views about their rapport with the family assistants they had seen.

Table 4.1. Student indications of their rapport with the family assistant: Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Rapport Items:	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	yes	no	yes	no
1. Does the family assistant				
a. like working with you?	24	0	38	0
b. want to help you?	24	0	38	0
2. Do you like to:				
work with the Family Assistant?	24	0	37	1
3. Is it easy to talk to the Family Assistant?	24	0	38	0

Impact of Family Assistants

It is one thing to have rapport and enjoy working with another, it is quite another to view such a relationship as producing outcomes which are intended by the program. Of particular interest in evaluating the School-Home Liaison Program was to determine whether the students viewed themselves, as a result of working with family assistants, as: (1) learning anything; (2) getting along better with their teachers; (3) getting along better with other students; (4) finding their school subjects more interesting; and (5) feeling, in general, better about school.

As shown in Table 4.2, half of the students at Julia Richman High School and about 69% of the students at Central Commercial High School indicated they had learned something helpful from the family assistant.

The students from Julia Richman, however, were much more negative (55%) as contrasted with students from Central Commercial in their assessment of the positive impact of the family assistants on their getting along better with their teachers and other students, on their liking school subjects better, or their feeling better about school.

In summary, it appears that the students at Central Commercial High School were more positive as to the efforts of the School-Home Liaison Program on their performance in school than students at Julia Richman High School. This is contrary to the actual academic and behavioral findings reported in Chapter III.

Table 4.2. Student indications of the impact of Family Assistants on their roles as students: Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Impact Items	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	yes	no	yes	no
1. Have you learned anything helpful from the Family Assistant?	12	12	23	15
2. Since working with the Family Assistant do you get along better with:				
a. your teachers?	4	20	20	18
b. other students?	4	20	24	14
3. Since working with the Family Assistant do you find that your school subjects are more interesting?	4	20	20	18
4. Since working with the Family Assistant do you feel better about school?	4	20	17	21

Student Suggestions

Unfortunately only a few sample students at both schools responded to an open-ended question asking them for suggestions for improving the family assistant program. The findings reported in Table 4.3, indicate that of those students responding, the major suggestions were to have more family assistants and visits and to broaden the program to more students. This certainly represents more of an endorsement than a criticism of the School-Home Liaison Program.

Of the suggestions, involving change in practice, little can be concluded except, perhaps, that students may wish to be contacted before their parents are confronted.

Table 4.3: Student responses to open-ended suggestions for improving the School-Home Liaison Program.

Student Responses	Julia Richman	Central Commercial
	Number	Number *
Have more Family Assistants and visits -	3	4
Make available to all students and/or publicize	2	6
Contact at school before contacting home	2	1
Need younger Family Assistants	1	0
Provide general counseling	1	0
Get correct data on student before contacting parents	0	1
Talk with students and parents together	2	0

* Of 38 students interviewed at Central Commercial High School and of 24 students interviewed at Julia Richman High school, only 12 students from Central Commercial and 11 students from Julia Richman gave responses.

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

In addition to data on parent perceptions of rapport with family assistants, impact of family assistants on their children and suggestions for improving program, data were also gathered on parents perceptions of whether the family assistants were responsive to the needs of their children as they saw the situation.

Parent Rapport with Family Assistants

The summary of data reported in Table 4.4, indicates that the sample parents who saw family assistants, as the case with students, were overwhelmingly positive concerning their desire to work with and talk with family assistants; and that the family assistants liked and wanted to work with them.

Table 4.4, Parent indications of their rapport with family assistants; Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Rapport Items:	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Does the Family Assistant				
a. like working with you?	25	0	14	0
b. want to help you?	25	0	14	0
2. Do you like to work with the Family Assistant?	25	0	14	0
3. Is it easy to talk with the Family Assistant?	25	0	14	0

Impact of Family Assistants

The parents, who saw a family assistant staff member, were much more likely than students to indicate that they had learned something helpful to them from the family assistant. (See Table 4.5). Approximately 64% of the sample parents from Julia Richman High School and 93% of the sample parents from Central Commercial High School indicated they learned something helpful.

On the other hand, approximately 32% of the Julia Richman High School parents and 50% of the Central Commercial High School parents who, since working with a family assistant, thought that their child got along better with his teachers and other children, found his school subjects more interesting, felt better about school in general and was more willing to do school work (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Parental indications of impact of family assistants: Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School

Impact Items:	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Have you learned anything helpful from family assistants?	16	9	13	1
2. Since working with the family assistant, does your child get along better with:				
a. his teachers?	8	17	6	8
b. other students?	8	17	8	6
3. Since working with the family assistant does your child find that his school subjects are more interesting?	8	17	7	7

	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
4. Since working with the family assistant does your child feel better about school?	8	17	6	8
5. Do you think your child is more willing to try to do school work since working with the family assistant?	8	17	7	7

Responsiveness of Family Assistant to Student Needs

The findings reported in Table 4.6, indicate that of sample parents who had seen a family assistant about 40% of the Julia Richman High School parents and 71% of the Central Commercial parents viewed the family assistants as keeping them, the parents, well informed about what their child was doing at school and that the family assistant understands the needs of their child.

Table 4.6, Parental indications of family assistants' response to needs of their children: Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Items:	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Does the Family Assistant keep you informed about how well your child is doing in his school work?	9	16	10	4

	Julia Richman		Central Commercial	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
2. Do you think the family assistant understands what kind of help your child needs?	10	15	10	4

Parent Suggestions

As shown in Table 4.7, only four of the sample parents interviewed made any suggestions for improving the School-Home Liaison Program and two of these were to contact parents earlier when trouble begins. The sample parents who had seen a family assistant from Julia Richman High School were much more likely to make suggestions. Most of the suggestions of the Julia Richman High School parents were also to the effect that family assistants should contact them earlier when trouble begins. Only three parents were negative in their suggestions that the family assistants should exhibit more friendliness, concern or empathy. Four parents wanted the program expanded which, of course, involves more family assistants needed in the program and more frequent visits by the family assistants.

Table 4.7, Parental responses to open-ended questions for improving the School-Home Liaison Program.

Summary of Parental Responses:	Julia Richman	Central Commercial
	No	No*
1. Should contact parents earlier when trouble begins	9	2
2. Exhibit more friendliness, concern or empathy for parents	3	1
3. More frequent visits by family assistants	2	0

Summary of Parental Responses:	Julia Richman	Central Commercial
	No	No*
4. More family assistants needed	2	0
5. Make home visits in evening hours	1	0
6. Be more patient with students	0	1

*Only 4 out of 14 parents interviewed responded to open-end questions for improvement.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

Because of the differing functions and settings of the two high schools, information gathered from the staff at each school will be reported separately. On the basis of numerous interviews, observations and general impressions, the following conclusions were made by the Teaching & Learning Research Corp. evaluation staff.

Julia Richman

The family assistants at Julia Richman High School tend to be very positive in their reactions toward their School-Home Liaison Program.

The positive reactions of the workers toward the program appear to be in part attributable to good working relations with the guidance and Dean's offices. This seemed to be a significant factor in the overall program. Their general perception of the parents reaction to them was also favorable. Perhaps this is due to parents often calling for follow-up reports on their children. The family assistant workers are from the school community and, perhaps, because of this, relate well with the parents.

This rapport was an essential objective of the program. The positive feelings of the family assistants may also be due to the efforts of Mrs. Ryan who saves time as a liaison between the administration and the workers. Also this organization made for an efficient allocation of the work load. The workers said that Mrs. Ryan gets along with everyone, and perhaps for this reason, there was no feeling of tension among the working force.

However, similar to a concern at Central Commercial High School, some workers complain of low wages. They have no bargaining rights to the Union of Para-professionals because they had no contract with the Board of Education. They have neither specific office space nor a telephone reserved for the program which is essential for making appointments before home visits. The workers feel that an identification card issued by the Board of Education would help insure their credibility with the parents they visit. The Parent Association puts out a newsletter to inform the parents of the role of the family assistants, but the workers feel that this communication was insufficient. They would like an expansion of their program to include more workers so that they could contact the parents in non-crisis situations.

One school counselor interviewed expressed her appreciation for the workers. She said that they were an intelligent and astute group of women. They were used by the school as interpreters of the policy of the school in relation to the community. The advantage of having the workers come from the same community as the students made for a better rapport with the parents. The counselor did not use their files, but she relied on the family assistants as resource people because she was not from the community. She thought of the workers as "feelers" sensing the attitude of the community.

Central Commercial

The family assistants at Central Commercial High School feel that their salary, which they report to be less than school aides, does not recompence them for their difficult and demanding work. As a result, some concluded that the administration is unable to get full time family assistants and must use school aides in a split schedule.

Central Commercial High School is not a community school and therefore the workers are not always familiar with each community's resources. Some parents, according to workers, refuse to cooperate until the assistants supply proof that their child has been misbehaving. Unfortunately, drug use and other school related behavior cannot readily be observed by the parents. In addition, some parents are reported to be suspicious about the intentions of the family assistants. Both of these factors lead to disbelief on the part of some of the parents. Another problem reported by the family assistants is the slow response of the school administration to reported instances of defiant behavior.

Although, the staff of the program are experienced at establishing community-school relations, they realize a need for basic training in human relations and social work techniques. The present structure of the School-Home Liaison Program at Central Commercial High School is very amorphous, therefore, the group desires better organization and recommends a coordinator as well as clearly defined objectives and job descriptions.

They also desire procedures which would ensure better communication between themselves and between other segments of the school administration. Accordingly, the family assistants want closer association with the guidance office. Also they wish more recognition of their role by the school administration. They especially would like the administration to inform the teaching staff and student and parent groups about their functions. They would also like to attend and participate in teachers' meetings and conferences to share information about problem students.

Individual Interviews with Family Assistants

One family assistant, is Puerto Rican and spends most of her time within the school interpreting. She pointed out that the job description from the Board of Education does not state that the family assistants should work outside of the school. She felt that they were doing the unwanted work of the truant officer. Also she felt a social worker should be assigned to the school to make contact for home visits. She was concerned with the growing drug problem.

Another family assistant observed, was assigned to patrol the health room. She was supposed to control behavior in the room and to keep students who were cutting classes from wandering in and out. The family assistant said they were assigned to see students and parents during the afternoon, but devoted the morning to duties within the school.

All of the workers seemed enthusiastic. One told of contacting a parent on Sunday afternoon, after making two unsuccessful attempts to contact the parent during the week.

An evaluation staff member was sent to talk to a counselor in the guidance office. The counselor said that the counselors never came in contact with the family assistants at Central Commercial High School and they, thought the workers to be assisting the attendance teacher and truant officer. The guidance counselor did not seem to think that the function of the family assistants should be expanded to include some duties of the guidance officer, "This would only complicate the role of the family assistants". Also, the counselor felt that the maturity of the students at Central Commercial High School, the majority of whom work and go to school, would not tolerate the watchfulness of the family assistants.

It appears to the evaluation staff of Teaching & Learning Research Corp. that the family assistants at both schools believe they can and do make a valuable contribution to helping students and parents. They see their main problem, particularly at Central Commercial High School, as being primarily organizational and as a need to expand in staff to adequately service their clients. The fact that students and parents who have seen a family assistant also value the program and that so many eligible students and parents in both schools have not been contacted by family assistants lends credibility to the family assistants claim of being understaffed.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The nature of the students referred, as well as features of the school settings, in effect, dictates the policies and problems that the School-Home Liaison Program and any subsequent evaluation will encounter. Students who are classified as "chronic" truants are referred to the program by one of the special services. A worker, a para-professional, is assigned to the "case" and attempts are made to contact the family with the intent of returning the student to the school setting. A significant proportion of the population have been placed in an "Official Section" which in effect are paper sections comprised of students who have been declared as chronically truant. The difficulties in obtaining information on such a population, be it by a family assistant for the School-Home Liaison Program or a Teaching & Learning Research Corp. person for an evaluation of the program are not easily or always overcome. The family assistants, of course, are very cognizant of this situation and indicate that many appointments were not kept by parents and/or students, even after repeated attempts. This can be corroborated by the experiences of our evaluation staff.

There are other considerations which act to hinder the objectives of the family assistants. The caseload of each worker normally exceeds 100 families. One day per week must be devoted to the maintenance of records. This leaves only four days weekly that can be given to field consultation.

The family assistant is also given other duties intermittently during the school term such as recoding data for new class sheets or some form of hall patrol. This multiplicity of duties cannot but serve to lessen the effectiveness of the family assistant to achieve the original objectives of the School-Home Liaison Program.

Another factor that cannot be ignored is the pay rate accorded to the family assistants. In many instances there has not been a pay raise for the past three years. It is possible that the lack of adequate economic rewards may have negative effects on the morale of the workers. It is in this light too that the performance of these family assistants should be evaluated.

Faced with a staggering caseload, relatively low pay for field work in sometimes hazardous neighborhoods; it is commendable that they do reach a percentage of the students. Talking with the family assistants has left a very positive feeling with the Teaching & Learning evaluation staff regarding the genuine concern of these family assistants for the students they are to aid. It appears to the evaluation staff that the weight of their multiple duties deters these workers from realizing their full potential. The fact they they had done as well as they have is a compliment to their drive, desire, and capabilities to communicate with many parents and students at a level valued by students and parents alike.

In conclusion it should be stressed that the students involved in the School-Home Liaison Program are by definition those whom the school has not been successful in acclimatizing to the school setting. Is it fair to expect relatively untrained overworked, underpaid para-professionals to succeed with students who are chronic truants and generally alienated from school?

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to the originally pessimistic expectations of the Teaching & Learning Research Corp.evaluation staff and in spite of the handicaps encountered, there have been many positive results of the School-Home Liaison Program. Briefly summarized, the major findings reported in the previous chapters are:

1. The sample students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Julia Richman High School who had been serviced by a Family Assistant as compared to a norm group of other students in their school:

   a. exhibited a decrease in absenteeism during the 1969-70 school year as compared to the 1968-69 school year.

   b. exhibited a decrease in being late for classes during the 1969-70 school year as compared to the 1968-69 school year.

   c. exhibited similar patterns of change in English achievement levels from June 1969 to June 1970.

2. The sample students in the School-Home Liaison Program at Central Commercial High School as contrasted to students in the program at Julia Richman High School did not do so well. As compared to a norm group, students who had been serviced by a family assistant increased in absenteeism and tardiness and dropped in achievement levels. Whether this group would have done even worse without the family assistants is open to question.

3. Given the responses of the students at Central Commercial High School as well as at Julia Richman High School, that they had rapport with their assistants, that the program helped many of them, and that they wanted the program expanded, warrants the view that the School-Home Liaison Program is making a contribution to the welfare of those students who have exhibited serious problems of truancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major recommendations of the Teaching & Learning Research Corp, evaluation staff revolve around expanding the School-Home Liaison Program and organizational features so as to provide services to all those students who are referred to the program. However, inasmuch as each school family assistant program differs in important respects, our recommendations are presented separately for Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School.

Central Commercial

Central Commercial High School is fortunate to have a staff of enthusiastic and deeply concerned workers. We recommend that the role and image of the family assistant workers at Central Commercial High School be somewhat reshaped. Also the sensitivity and maturity of the student body should be considered if reorganization and training of this program take place. Seventeen to twenty year old students who attend school a half day, and work the other half day need more guidance services. The program at Central Commercial High School can be strengthened along the lines of the program at Julia Richman High School, by including additional family assistants who themselves desire to be seen as social service workers.

There is also a need for organization among the family assistants themselves. With clearly defined duties the family assistants would be a happier working force. The role of the family assistant is not clear to other school personnel. The assistants perceive themselves as "helping people"; the guidance counselors see the workers as an extension of the truant office; the students see their role as glorified teacher aides or worse, as policemen who patrol the halls, gathering evidence and then informing on students to their parents. Students at Central Commercial High School are not as likely as students at Julia Richman to be told beforehand of planned parent visitations. It is recommended that the program be organized so that it will have more association with the guidance office. The duties of the family assistant should be less discipline oriented and more service oriented, that is, the family assistants should not also serve a disciplinary school aides.

On a more positive stance and in light of the success of the School-Home Liaison Program with those parents and students who have worked with a family assistant, it is suggested that more family assistants be hired so that greater effort can be made to have home contracts and increase the number of home visits and or visits at school with parents and students. We believe that if this is done, the School-Home Liaison Program is more likely to bring greater numbers of truant students back into a valued participation in school.

Julia Richman

The school population at Julia Richman has almost doubled in the last few years, yet the number of family assistants has not increased. With the rise of truancy and drop-outs, which has exceeded the rise in population proportionately, there is an apparent need for more workers.

The Julia Richman Program seems to succeed in defining the role of the workers. The administrators, the teachers, students, and workers themselves are not confused about what their duties are. The co-ordinator insures that communication flows between administration, to workers and parents.

The workers never make a home visit without first calling the student and informing him of the visit. This eliminates some of the fear and apprehension which students have about the program.

This program is distinctive from the program at Central Commercial for two reasons. First, because its organization gives the workers role identity within the school. Secondly, the main function of the workers seems to be the establishment of rapport between school and home, and not to simply report the negative behavior of the students. To increase this relationship, it is recommended that better record keeping be implemented so that follow-up on contacted parents could be made. To this end it is recommended that the Dean's office, the guidance staff, and the attendance teacher make note of their relationship with the parents contacted by the family assistants. In addition, it seems at this time, that the initiative taken by the workers at Central Commercial in viewing the records of students and making contacts on their own, might be explored by the staff at Julia Richman High School.

In summary, our impressions at Julia Richman High School and Central Commercial High School support their request for an increase in staff to match the recent increase in school population.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Instructions to Interviewer:

You will notice that most of the items are dichotomized into two responses. These responses are coded "1" or "0". Please place the code response for each item on the line at the right of the item. When no direction is given with an item, the responses are "yes" and "no", in which case "yes" =1 and "no" = 0. If a number is expressly called for, indicate the actual response.

I. Rating of Family Assistant's cooperation and rapport.

1. How many times has the Family Assistant visited your home, or spoken to you at school? _____

2. Does the Family Assistant ever make an appointment and then not show up? _____

3. If "yes" to Number 2, how often would you say that this happened? _____

4. How have you been getting along with the Family Assistant? ("very well" code 1; "not very well" code 0). _____

5. If you have been seen more than once, do you get along with the Family Assistant better now than at first? _____

6. Is it easy to talk with the Family Assistant? _____

7. Do you like working with the Family Assistant? _____

8. Does the Family Assistant seem to like working with you? _____

9. Does the Family Assistant really want to help you? _____

10. Have you learned anything that has really been helpful to you from the Family Assistant?

_____

II. Program Evaluation

11. Do you think that you are getting along better with your teachers since you have been working with the Family Assistant?

_____

12. Do you think that you have been getting along better with other students since you have been working with the Family Assistant?

_____

13. Do you find that your school subjects are more interesting since you have been working with the Family Assistant?

_____

14. Do you feel better about school and what it can do for you since you have been working with the Family Assistant?

_____

15. Do you have any suggestions that would make the program work better?

_____

APPENDIX B

PARENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Instructions to Interviewer:

You will notice that most of the items in this schedule are dichotomized into two responses. These responses are coded "1" or "0". Please place the code response number for each item on the line at the right of the item. When no direction is given with an item the responses are "yes" or "no", in which case "yes" = 1 and "no" = 0. If a number is expressly called for indicate the actual response.

I. Rating of Family Assistant's cooperation and rapport

1. How many times has the Family Assistant been to your home, or spoken to you at home or in school? _____

2. Does the Family Assistant ever make an appointment and then not show up? _____

3. If "yes" to Number 2, how often would you say this happened? _____

4. How have you been getting along with the Family Assistant? ("very well" code 1; "not very well" code 0)? _____

5. Do you get along with the Family Assistant better now than at first? _____

6. Is it easy to talk with the Family Assistant? _____

7. Do you like working with the Family Assistant? _____

8. Does the Family Assistant seem to like working with you? _____

9. Does the Family Assistant really want to help you? _____

10. Have you learned anything that has really been helpful to you from the Family Assistant? _____

II. Program Evaluation

	Code	Col.
11. Do you think your child (children) seem to be getting along better with teachers since you have been working with the Family Assistant?	____	____
12. Do they (does he/she) seem to be getting along better with other students since you have been working with the Family Assistant?	____	____
13. Do you think your child (children) are <u>more</u> <u>interested</u> in their school subjects since you have been working with the Family Assistant?	____	____
14. Do you think that you child (children) feels better about school and what it can do for him since you have been working with the Family Assistant?	____	____
15. Do you think you child (children) is more willing to try to do school work since you have been working with the Family Assistant?	____	____

III. Parents' perception of Family Assistant's response to their expressed needs of the child.

16. Does the Family Assistant keep you well informed about how your child (children) are doing in school work.	____	____
17. Do you think the Family Assistant understands what kind of help your child (children) needs?	____	____

IV. Parents' perception of extent to which Family Assistant keeps them informed of child's progress.

	Code	Col.
18. Does the Family Assistant let you know when your child has a problem at school?	_____	_____

V. Open-ended

19. Do you have any suggestions that would make the program better?	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL-HOME LIAISON PROGRAM
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Hiring the poor to serve the poor, as a fundamental approach to poverty in an automated age, has many advantages. It increases vocational opportunities for the undereducated slum-dweller, since human service jobs are the least likely to be automated out of existence, and it helps accelerate the development of service occupations appropriate for untrained people. Ultimately, it may produce a better educational system, as well as giving employment to millions of persons. As HARYOU states: "In a very real way, the use of indigenous nonprofessionals in staff positions is forced by the dearth of trained professionals. At the same time, however, the use of such persons grows out of concern for a tendency of professionals to "flee from the client," for the difficulty of communication between persons of different backgrounds and outlooks. It is Haryou's belief that the use of persons only "one step removed" from the client will improve the giving of service as well as provide useful and meaningful employment for Harlem's residents." (8)

The employment of the poor in the slum schools has become appropriate, logical and perhaps, crucial. Many service jobs require qualities, such as the ability to learn from practical experience, patience, kindliness and responsiveness, that no graduate school has yet been able to incorporate into its curriculum. Many such jobs could probably be filled well by poor people lacking the necessary credentials. (5) Thus, "while members of the slum community may lack much formal education, they have wisdom bought from surviving the rigors of their environment. They may lack understanding of the organization of the school, but, know intimately the organization of the community. They are unschooled in the nuances of middle-class mores and customs, but know full well what will or will not "go" in the slum community. They may lack a grasp of educational philosophy and theory, but are fully conversant with what is or is not perceived as important, honest and useful by the school's constituency." (12)

One of the greatest deficiencies of the home-school relationship has been the social distance between the parents and the school staff.

The students of parents who hold positive attitudes about the school and their children may well see these positive attitudes manifested in higher academic achievement, social adjustment and emotional stability in their children. Similarly, it would seem reasonable to suspect that parents who do not support the school and its many goals would have children who reflect these negative attitudes in their low achievement, motivational level and school interest. Deutsch (4), Davis (3) and Sexton (14) have noted the need for parental involvement with the school and their children in order to change students' achievement and attitudes.

A school which does not secure the trust and confidence of its community has failed. Therefore, many more school systems have undertaken much more aggressive school-community relations programs in an effort to narrow the social distance which exists between the educated work-secure faculties and their less educated insecure communities. These programs often take the form of hiring family assistants or other paraprofessionals as "bridge" people who work between the school and the neighborhood. This can be seen in the community school programs in New Haven, Flint, Detroit, and the All-Day Neighborhood School Program of the New York City Board of Education. (12)

Yet another advantage of hiring family assistants from the community for a school-home liaison project is that the helpers, or family assistants in this case, often gain more from the helping process than the persons who ostensibly are being helped "Programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Synanon may be viewed in part as substituting for the addiction to alcohol and narcotics and addiction to helping. Engaging in a helping occupation enhances the self-image of low-income persons; it provides them with psychological support; and they themselves report considerable satisfaction in the job. (1)

There must be a profound and lasting change in school programs for children of the slums. The schools must be revitalized and rehabilitation programs must be tailored to the needs of the community. This requires enthusiastic workers who can truly relate to the community, inspire the residents, and offer trust and support. Family assistants who come from the community itself are in the best position to do this, and as such, may serve as ego models for their fellow community residents. "It may well be that the very person who today is most troublesome to society can tomorrow become its most valuable contributor." (10)

A more personalized service is needed that is genuinely responsive to the feelings, attitudes and life-styles of the lower-class person. By drawing persons from and of the community, representative of the style, values, needs and wants of the communities low-income residents, the family assistant serves as a "bridge", interpreting the community to the school personnel and vice versa. Also, the non-professional worker has no need to validate his presence in the community, which give him a considerable advantage over the professional from the outset. Communication can be shortcut and friction eliminated because much is taken for granted as a result of the common background. (1) In addition, family assistants of the same ethnic and social class group are more likely to establish mutual trust and rapport with the parents, and the parents are less likely to try to delude him. (7)

Typically, disadvantaged parents tend to be suspicious and distrustful of the school, and they do not have pleasant interpersonal relations with school personnel. "The problems slum people have with the authorities, their different patterns of speech and restricted vocabularies, their social and physical isolation from the rest of the community, work against them by severely restricting their knowledge of and receptivity to necessary information. The flow of information reaching the slum resident is inadequate and his ability to process and utilize this information is now well-developed." (12) Thus, the school is often seen by the poor as an authoritarian institution, walled off from the slum community, usually incommunicative, and aloof from the lives of the people. The school's attitude is often interpreted as unsympathetic and disapproving of slum people. It is little wonder then that a schism develops between the school and the home, even among those parents who hold favorable attitudes towards education, unless measures are taken to promote harmonious school-home relations.

Many educators today believe that every urban classroom should make extensive use of paraprofessionals, such as family assistants, who are residents of the community. The use of these people would provide community people with jobs and provide students with the model of a minority group adult in a position of responsibility. Not only would parents benefit from working with the schools, but the children would benefit from having informed parents. The involvement of parents with the school inevitably leads to greater interest on the part of the student.

Following is a brief summary of three projects experimenting in school-home liaison program in St Louis, Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri and Philadelphia, Pa.

An experiment in school-home liaison in St. Louis, Missouri represented an attempt at creating a more satisfying relationship between the home and the school, so one would help and reinforce the other to aid the learning process of the school's disadvantaged students. (9) It was specifically designed to bridge the communication and information gap between the home and the school by using family community aides as liaison personnel. It was assumed that family aides would provide a method of increasing disadvantaged parents' knowledge of the school and the family involvement in it, which is different from that typically accomplished by teachers and certified personnel. The preliminary results of this program were favorable, showing increases in home-school cooperation to the advantage of the children involved. The parents were more willing to accept and to cooperate with the family aides than they usually were with the professional staff members of the school.

In a home-school liaison project in Kansas City, Missouri, a coordinator tried to eliminate these factors that may cause high reading retardation:

1. Poor school attendance.
2. Excessive transferring from one school to another.
3. Poor home conditions.
4. Lack of interest on the part of the parents.
5. Health problems in the home.
6. Few father images within the home.
7. Little educational tradition in the home.

Stress was placed on good attendance for the child in school, and attendance citations were given to children with perfect attendance. Parents were also reminded of their responsibilities to their children in the area of education, and a good school-home rapport was ultimately established. "The home-school coordinator is now a familiar and accepted figure in the area. He speaks their language' while insisting that parents keep their children in school and they they stop forcing them to babysit. He obtains shoes and other needed clothing for children." (2)

When the Philadelphia Board of Education developed its Great Cities School Improvement Project, it established as a major goal the improvement of school-community relations. This was accomplished through the use of school-community coordinators who were selected from the community served by each of the project schools. (15)

"Five coordinators were hired in 1960 to serve four schools, and the program was so successful that it was expanded in 1964 to nine coordinators for seven schools. The coordinators were technically responsible to the principal of each school, but actually worked most closely with the school guidance counselor. Most of their time was spent in the community, in the homes of pupils. They talked to parents about their child's strengths and needs, helped parents learn how to help their children, and interpreted school rules, programs and activities." (12)

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